

Rates and Usages of the U.S. 3-Cent Circular Die Stamped Envelopes: 1917-1960

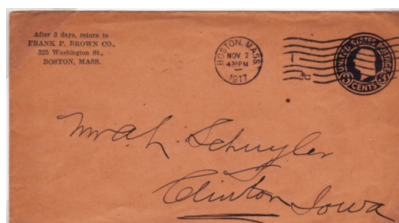
Synopsis of Exhibit

Scope: This exhibit shows how the United States 3¢ Circular Die stamped envelopes were used in their day. Also included are 3¢ Circular Die stamped envelopes revalued to 2¢ beginning in 1920, revalued to 4¢ in 1958, or overprinted for official Post Office Department use.

History: The exhibitor has been collecting the Circular Die postal stationery since 1985, and has been exhibiting it since 1991. His exhibit of postal history of the entire series won seven national level gold medals, five Marcus White awards, and numerous other honors. However, in time he acquired more than enough material to fill 15 or more frames, well over the 10 frame limit. Something had to give. After agreeing with several philatelic judges that the strongest pieces were the 3¢ envelopes, the exhibitor decided to pare the exhibit down to those envelopes alone. In its new and more focused incarnation, this exhibit won its first national level gold medal at APS Stampshow 2009 in Pittsburgh, where it also won the Marcus White award. The exhibit then went on to win the Marcus White Showcase Grand Award at ARIPEX 2010 in Mesa, Arizona. It won its second national level gold award at APS Stampshow 2013 in Milwaukee, and it has also won four national level vermeil medals.

Classification: The exhibitor organized this exhibit as a postal history exhibit. While this exhibit may be classified as a postal stationery exhibit as well as a postal history exhibit, it presents a radical departure from the usual method of collecting and exhibiting postal stationery in two important ways. (1) As a postal history exhibit, it focuses on rates and usages, and it generally ignores die, knife, watermark, shade, and overprint varieties. (2) It includes many items that have adhesive stamps added to pay for rate increases, multiple rates, foreign mail rates, special postal services, and/or air mail service.

Key items: There are so many important pieces scattered throughout the exhibit that only a handful can be mentioned here. Among them are the following:



- Earliest documented usage of any 3¢ Circular Die envelope, used on first day of 3¢ rate: 11/2/17. (See illustration above.)
- Usage from U.S. Postal Agency in Siberia, Russia. (Only 3 reported.)
- Usage to China via U.S. Postal Agency in Shanghai, remailed within China with Chinese stamps paying forwarding postage.
- Registered usage delayed by civil war in Russia.
- Commercial usage of 3¢ carmine color error.
- Earliest documented usage of double overprint error.
- Usage with unlisted New York supplementary mail postmarks.
- Alaska Star Route air crash cover. (Only 3 reported.)
- Pearl Harbor Day usage to the Philippines: 12/7/41. Returned to sender.
- Enemy civilian internee mail usage.
- Usage to an unlisted APO. Returned to sender, addressee POW.
- Usage to PO Box 1663, Santa Fe, New Mexico, an undercover address for the secret atomic bomb facility at Los Alamos.
- Complete double impression error.
- Private air carrier usage from the U.S. Virgin Islands to Puerto Rico.
- Usage from American Samoa at unpublished 40¢ air mail rate.
- Usage to Canada returned to sender with **MAIL FOR THIS ADDRESS PROHIBITED** marking.
- Usage from Canadian coastal steamer in U.S. territorial waters.
- Usage to Germany intercepted en route and held by British authorities.
- Usage to German occupied Denmark intercepted en route and delayed by British authorities.
- Usage to the Canary Islands at the 3¢ P.U.A.S. treaty rate, forwarded to Sweden postage due for difference in rates.
- Combined surface + air mail usage to Ceylon at 27¢ rate. (Illustrated in the international “Beecher Book”.)
- Combined surface + air mail usage to Siam at 28¢ rate.
- Envelope intended for 1937 return flight of the German Airship Hindenburg at 40¢ Zeppelin rate. Dispatched by surface mail.
- Air mail usage to Turkey rerouted via South Africa to avoid war zone.
- Commercial in-period usage of 3¢ envelope revalued to 4¢.